No. 12.

THE FREETHINKER'S

TEXT-BOOK.

PART III.

FREETHOUGHT.

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of Constantine—were spared by Constantius, the two boys were incarcerated in the Castle of Marcellium, near Cæsarea, which had been long before a palace of the kings of Cappadocia. Here, according to Gibbon, "they pursued their studies and practised their exercises, under the tuition of the most skilful masters; and the numerous household appointed to attend, or rather to guard, the nephews of Constantine was not unworthy of the dignity of their birth." (Gibbon, "Decline and Fall," chap. xix.) When, in A.D. 331, on the 5th of March, it was found necessary to associate Gallus with Constantius, the young Cæsar did not forget his duty to his younger brother. Julian was restored to liberty, his ample patrimony conceded to him, and for a brief period he was allowed to live in peace. After the murder of Gallus by Constantius, Julian was, in May, A.D. 355, sent to the city of Athens in what Gibbon calls "honourable exile." "As he had discovered from his earliest youth a propensity, or rather passion, for the language, the manners, the learning, and the religion of the Greeks, he obeyed with pleasure an order so agreeable to his wishes. Far from the tumult of arms, and the treachery of courts, he spent six months amidst the groves of the academy, in a free intercourse with the philosophers of the age, who studied to cultivate the genius, to encourage the vanity, and to inflame the devotion of their royal pupil." (Gibbon, as cited above.) What the great historian means by stating that Julian's vanity and devotion were encouraged by his tutors it is most difficult to say. Such a course of conduct would be altogether foreign to the nature of the Athenian philosophers, and we are most unwillingly compelled to conclude that this remark of the philosophic Gibbon was written only to "appease the advocates of orthodox Christianity."

At this same time Gregory Nazianzen and Basil, both of whom became pillars of the orthodox Church, were students at Athens, and it is a curious fact that the greatest supporters of Christianity, and its most powerful and persistent adversary, may be said with perfect truth to have graduated in the same university. (Upon this point see Lewes' "History of Philosophy," vol. iii.; Knight's edition.) Gibbon states that Julian's instructors found "their labours were not unsuccessful; and Julian inviolably preserved for Athens that tender regard which seldom fails to arise in a liberal mind from the recollection of the

place where it has discovered and exercised its growing powers. The gentleness and affability of manners, which his temper suggested and his situation imposed, insensibly engaged the affections of the strangers, as well as citizens, with whom he conversed. Some of his fellow-students might perhaps examine his behaviour with an eye of prejudice and aversion; but Julian established in the schools of Athens a general prepossession in favour of his virtues and talents, which was soon diffused over the Roman world." (Gibbon, as cited above). In a note on the above passage the historian remarks that "Libanius and Gregory Nazianzen have exhausted the arts as well as the powers of their eloquence to represent Julian as the first of heroes, or the worst of tyrants." We may here note that Gregory can only find fault with some assumed bodily imperfections of Julian, although, as Gibbon declares, he says in his Orations, book iv., that even when a fellow-student of Julian's he "foresaw and foretold the calamities of the Church and the State" which would follow upon the accession of Julian to the throne. This event occurred in the year 361. Julian entered the city of Constantinople on the 11th of December in that year, amidst the general acclamations of the army, the people, and the senate, by all of whom his accession was regarded as the salvation of the empire. His reputation for philosophy had almost been eclipsed by the glory he had acquired in Gaul. Conqueror of the warlike Franks, restorer of the old repute of the empire, Julian was everywhere regarded as one in whom all the virtues of old Rome had been revivified.

Our space precludes us from further describing the character, habits, mode of life, and wise political conduct of this most extraordinary man. The reader who desires to know more of Julian than we can, in accordance with our limits and the requirements of our subject, impart, will find in Gibbon all these faithfully and impartially portrayed. We have here to consider the course he followed with respect to the State religion established by his uncle, and which we may as well here state Julian was determined to destroy. His writings were very voluminous, and his literary ability may be easily imagined when we state that "the Misopogon, the Cæsars, several of his orations, and his elaborate work against the Christian religion, were composed in the long nights of the two winters, the former

of which he passed at Constantinople, and the latter at Antioch." ("Decline and Fall," chap. xxii.)

We must here premise that Julian was an adherent—we may say, a passionate adherent—of the ancient religious system of Greece and Rome. In all probability this resulted from the reaction which inevitably followed his renunciation of Christianity. Gibbon (chap. xxiii.) appears to have seen and acknowledged this. He says:—"The vehement zeal of the Christians, who despised the worship and overturned the altars of those fabulous deities, engaged their votary in a state of irreconcileable hostility with a very numerous party of his subjects." We are to remember that this hostility is wholly to be ascribed to the Christians themselves; from the moment when State patronage had been extended towards them, the disciples of the new religion had manifested the most complete intolerance of the cherished belief and practices of the followers of the old religion, and from this cruel intolerance arose a most bitter feeling between the professors of Paganism and Christianity. Mosheim says:—"This apostasy of Julian from the Gospel of Christ to the worship of the gods was owing partly to his aversion to the Constantine family, who had imbued their hands in the blood of his father, brother, and kinsman." ("Ecclesiastical History," cent. iv., bk. ii., chap. i., sec. xii.) Waddington, alluding to the motive of Julian's change from Christianity, writes that it is usually attributed to "the hatred which he indulged towards the name and sons of Constantine, owing to the cruelties which they had inflicted on his family.....Another reason alleged is, that when he saw the dissensions of the Christians and their rancour against each other his faith was perplexed." ("History of the Church," c. viii., p. 107.) We are not to suppose that so learned a man as Julian implicitly believed the fables connected with the religion of the ancient Greeks and Romans; but, remembering that in his time there was no middle course between Christianity and Paganism open to the thinker, no Secularism, with its principle of making the best of this world, no formulated science of Humanity, it is not surprising that Julian had recourse to that old system which had proved itself sufficiently broad to permit of progress, learning, civilisation, and refinement.

Soon after his accession to the imperial crown Julian commanded that those Christian bishops whom Constantius had banished should be allowed to return. This act of

toleration was received by the Christians with a very bad grace. They regarded it very nearly in the same light as the Nonconformists regarded the universal toleration proclaimed by James II. in England. The English Puritans would only welcome toleration which was extended towards themselves; because King James' scheme was extended to the Roman Catholics and Puritans, they treated it with the utmost abhorrence. The ecclesiastical historian Sozomen —in a spirit of the purest orthodoxy—expressly declares that this act of generous toleration on the part of Julian was prompted by no good intention, but was devised by the anti-Christian Emperor in order to introduce divisions and contentions among the Christians. "At this time, undoubtedly," says Lardner (vol. iv., p. 38), "Julian openly declared that they might all worship God in their own way, without molestation from him." This love of justice on Julian's part is admitted by Mosheim. Of course, Julian's clemency was extended to all the Christians alike, without distinction of sect or school. Donatist and Arian, each and all were allowed to return to their respective homes. There is a world of sarcasm in the following letter of Julian to the Arian heresiarch Aëtius. (Lardner, Ibid.) "Julian to the Bishop Aëtius. I have restored all others who were banished by the Emperor Constantius, upon account of the madness of the Galileans. I not only forgive you, but, in regard to our friendship and acquaintance, I desire you to come to me. I allow you the use of a public chariot, and a horseman for your journey." In thus allowing the rival sects "a fair field and no favour" the Emperor seems to have acted on the principle that, if allowed free play, Christianity would destroy itself by its own divisions. He soon, however, discovered that his subjects were by no means prepared to accept Philosophy as their only sure guide or providence of life. During the four centuries which had elapsed from the alleged crucifixion of Christ the progress of society had been wholly retrograde.

The knowledge of the Alexandrian schools had been nearly lost sight of by the people, and the would-be reformer had to be content with things as they were, or to enter upon his work of amelioration cautiously and by very slow degrees. This we think will account for, and explain, Julian's patronage of Hellenism—that is, Paganism. We cannot for an instant imagine that the crowned philosopher, the rational,

deeply-read student of Athens, was so foolish as to attach implicit credence—blind belief—to the vagaries connected with the mythology of Olympus. Nevertheless, we find that Julian laboured strenuously during his short reign to restore Hellenism to its pristine splendour. He undoubtedly did this because he imagined—wrongly as we think—more easily to wean his subjects from the Christian superstition by making the old religion more popular. Hence arose his numerous sacrifices and oblations to the gods and goddesses. Gibbon goes so far as to assert that "the genius and power of Julian were unequal to the enterprise of restoring a religion which was destitute of theological principles, of moral precepts, and of ecclesiastical discipline; which rapidly hastened to decay and dissolution, and was not susceptible of any solid or consistent reformation." ("Decline and Fall," chap. xxiii.) We think, with all deference to the philosophic historian, that Julian's "genius and power" are here very much underrated. If we consider the short duration of his reign, we shall find that Julian's scheme was by no means unsuccessful. "The legions of Gaul devoted themselves to the faith, as well as to the fortunes, of their victorious leader; and even before the death of Constantius, he had the satisfaction of announcing to his friends that they assisted with fervent devotion and voracious appetite at the sacrifices." (Ibid.) The truth is, that Julian was by far too hasty in his design of supplanting Christianity; yet it is due to his memory to state that he never condescended to use his authority as the Christian emperors, his predecessors, used theirs. Considering the age in which he lived, it is astonishing that his great attempt at revolution was accompanied by so few disorders, so little bloodshed. It must be remembered that Julian conscientiously believed that Christianity was an imposition upon human credulity; and it must, above all, be borne in mind that the so-called meek and peaceful disciples of orthodox Christianity were guilty of the most flagrant outrages against their Pagan countrymen and against the authority of the emperor. "At Pessinus the altar of Cybele was overturned almost in the presence of the emperor; and in the city of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, the temple of Fortune, the sole place of worship which had been left to the Pagans, was destroyed by the rage of a popular tumult.....Every calumny that could wound the reputation of the Apostate was credulously embraced by the fears and hatred of his

adversaries, and their indiscreet clamours provoked the temper of a sovereign whom it was their duty to respect and their interest to flatter." (Ibid.) Of course, the incendiaries who thus did their utmost to provoke a civil war were sometimes deservedly punished. They were at once enrolled among "the army of martyrs," and Christian fanaticism never ceased to invoke a malediction upon the tolerant monarch, "whose head" (to use the words of Gibbon) it "devoted to the justice of offended Heaven."

Foremost among the friends of Julian was the philosopher Libanius, of Antioch. Gibbon calls him the "incomparable master.....who had preserved, in a degenerate age, the Grecian purity of taste, of manners, and of religion." Libanius was bitterly opposed to Christianity, longed to see it superseded, but was doomed to disappointment by the untimely death of his royal pupil. "Libanius," says Gibbon, "experienced the peculiar misfortune of surviving the religion and the sciences to which he had consecrated his genius." ("Decline and Fall," chap. xxiv.)

It is not our purpose to follow the brief but glorious career of Julian to its close. We can only refer the reader to the pages of Gibbon for an account of the life and virtues of this most extraordinary monarch. Chaste, temperate, studious, and brave; even his enemies, blinded with fanatic hatred, have never succeeded in darkening his fame. Mosheim ("Eccles. Hist.," cent. iv., chap. i., sec. 13) takes exception to Julian's character in a manner which is, to say the least, very foreign to the historian's usual impartiality and readiness to acknowledge the truth. He says: "The real character of Julian has few lines of that uncommon merit that has been attributed to it; for, if we set aside his genuis .....if we except, moreover, his military courage, his love of letters, and his acquaintance with that vain and fanatical philosophy which was known by the name of modern Platonism, we shall find nothing remaining.....worthy of praise or productive of esteem." If we apply these ridiculous tests of Mosheim to any or all of earth's noblest men; if we denude them of their genius, their courage, and their learning, we shall, in all probability, feel but little disposed either to admire or esteem what is left. Who can read unmoved the last words of this greatest and best of the Byzantine emperors, whose tent in the wilds of Assyria was, by his companions in arms, aptly compared to the prison of Socrates?

"Friends and fellow soldiers," said the dying hero-sage, "the seasonable period of my departure is now arrived, and I discharge, with the cheerfulness of a ready debtor, the demands of nature. I have learned from philosophy how much the soul is more excellent than the body, and that the separation of the nobler substance should be the subject of joy, rather than of affliction. I have learned from religion that an early death has often been the reward of piety; and I accept, as a favour of the gods, the mortal stroke that secures me from the danger of disgracing a character which has hitherto been supported by virtue and fortitude. I die without remorse, as I have lived without guilt. I am pleased to reflect on the innocence of my private life; and I can affirm with confidence that the supreme authority, that emanation of the Divine Power, has been preserved in my hands pure and immaculate. Detesting the corrupt and destructive maxims of despotism, I have considered the happiness of the people as the end of government." (Gibbon, as cited above.) Compare this death of the unbelieving Julian, upon the field of honour, with the ignoble end of Constantine, who hoped, by allowing himself to be baptised, to condone at the eleventh hour for a life of the most flagitious nature; compare the dying Julian with Theodosius, or any other orthodox emperor either before or after Julian, and then determine which would—supposing there were a heavenly Paradise—be the most likely to obtain a blissful immortality, the unbelieving "Apostate" of unblemished life, or the blood-dyed and impure emperors over whose corpses the Christian Church was wont to shed hypocritical tears!

With the death of Julian the first era of the struggle between Freethought and Christianity may be said to have terminated. Julian had in this respect neglected his duty to posterity, lest his "choice might be imprudent or injudicious," and thus the good work he had achieved began and ended with himself. From this period a dense, opaque cloud of ignorance and barbarism came rapidly over Asia Minor and Europe like a pall. For many centuries superstition had its unopposed, unchecked career; for many centuries Freethought was outwardly invisible. It had fought long and vigorously, struggled bravely and with indomitable resolution, against falsehood and fraud. Overweighted as it was by tyranny, allied with barbaric ignorance, it was for a time compelled to lie dormant. By-and-

bye, however, we shall behold it again upspringing into life with renewed vigour, like the fabled Phœnix from its ashes, and in its Renaissance, or new birth, still deriving its origin from that Greece which ever has been the nursing mother of freedom, philosophy, art, and science.

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SECTION II.

WHAT IT OWES TO MOHAMMEDANISM.

In the last section of the "Freethinker's Text-Book" we have endeavoured to portray the struggle which took place between the Freethinkers of the early ages of Christianity and the Church of that time, also that between Freethought, as represented by the masters and pupils of the Alexandrian Museum, and Christianity. We have seen the latter apparently victorious by aid of the civil power; and it behoves us now to depict, as concisely as possible, the immediate results of this apparent triumph. Directly after the suppression of Paganism—that is to say, within fifty years after the death of Theodosius the Great—the world began to reap the natural harvest of superstition and superstitious practices and observances. Image worship, the cultus of human bones, blood-stained rags, and other "relics of the martyrs," these and a thousand other like instances of ignorance and credulity became fashionable among Christians. "The monks," says the Pagan philosopher Eunapius —one of the sorrowing survivors of the downfall of the old mythology—"the monks are the authors of the new worship which, in the place of those deities who are conceived by the understanding, has substituted the meanest and most contemptible slaves. The heads, salted and pickled, of those infamous malefactors who for the multitude of their crimes have suffered a just and ignominious death; their bodies, still marked by the impression of the lash, and the scars of those tortures which were inflicted by the sentence of the magistrate; such are the gods which the earth produces in our days; such are the martyrs, the supreme arbitrators of our prayers and petitions to the Deity, whose tombs are now consecrated as the objects of the veneration of the people." (Quoted by Gibbon, "Decline and Fall," chap. xxviii.) In vain did Vigilantius the Presbyter protest against this shameful degeneracy of his fellow Christians;

the whole Church, from the highest prelate to the most humble and insignificant deacon, went in for saint and relic worship. We know that this went on for twelve centuries, from Theodosius to the sixteenth century; and we need feel no surprise at finding the whole of Europe and Asia Minor, the whole of what had been civilised society, enveloped in an opaque cloud of ignorance and faith—that is, blind superstition. Protestant controversialists would fain separate that which they call Christianity from this most shocking period of darkness and depravity. They would have us to believe that "pure Christianity" existed, in the form of "an invisible Church," during these twelve hundred years of retrogression. The attempt, however well meant, to impose this idea upon our credulity has been too often exposed by Roman Catholic writers for us to dally long in its consideration. "To this groundless assumption," says the Catholic Bishop Milner, "I answer, that an invisible Church is no Church at all; that the idea of such a Church is at variance with the predictions of the prophets respecting Jesus Christ's future Church.....and indeed with the injunction of our Lord himself.....It is no less repugnant to the declaration of Luther, who says of himself [in the preface to his works], 'At first I stood alone;' and to that of Calvin, who says [Epist. 171], 'The first Protestants were obliged *to break off from the whole world*' [the italics are ours]; as also to that of the Church of England in her Homilies, where she says, 'Laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees, have been drowned in abominable idolatry, most detested by God and damnable to man, for 800 years and more.'" ("End of Religious Controversy," letter xxvii.)

Christianity stood alone, in the position of a triumphant religious system, about the year 420. On the 20th of April, 575, there was born at Mecca one who was to shake Christianity to its very centre—Mohammed Ibn (the son of) Abdallah. In the year 581 this youth accompanied his uncle, Abou Taleb, to Bozrah, a city on the borders of Syria. Here he made the acquaintance of some Nestorian monks, disciples of that Nestor, Bishop of Antioch, who had been persecuted and exiled at the instigation of Cyril of Alexandria, because he (Nestor) had betrayed a desire to reconcile the philosophy of Aristotle with the doctrines of Christianity. His followers—numbering many thousands—would never profess to believe that the Virgin Mary was

the Mother of God, or that she was always a virgin; and when their leader was banished to an Egyptian oasis, they migrated in a body to the region of the Euphrates, founded colleges at Edessa and Nisibis, and preached their doctrines throughout Syria, Arabia, Egypt, and even India and Tartary. They everywhere taught the Aristotelian philosophy, translated Aristotle into different languages, and, according to Draper (page 73), "their missionaries disseminated the Nestorian form of Christianity to such an extent over Asia that its worshippers eventually outnumbered all the European Christians of the Greek and Roman Churches combined." Into the hands of the Nestorians the young Mohammed had fallen, and well indeed did he lay to heart the instructions of the monks of Bozrah. Prior to this visit Mohammed had been a Pagan, worshipping the black stone (Caaba) of Mecca, and doing in all things as his fathers had done before him. We can well understand how it was that the young Arab imbibed at one and the same time his knowledge of Christianity and a detestation of its superstitions. He made many journeys to Syria—having married a wealthy widow of Mecca who traded with the Syrian towns—and, under the instruction of a Jewish cousin of his wife, Waraka, who had embraced Christianity, he learned to contemn and detest the adoration of the black stone of Mecca and its three hundred and sixty minor idols.

By-and-bye Mohammed began to follow the custom of the Christian hermits and anchorites: he accustomed himself to retire to a cave in Mount Hera, near Mecca, in which he either did, or pretended to, indulge in acts of meditation and prayer. He had, in all probability, become impressed with a truth which Mr. Bosworth Smith ("Mohammed and Mohammedanism," sec. ed., p. 100), has since enunciated: "Neither Christianity nor Judaism ever struck deep root in the Arabian soil. The people were not suited to them, or they were not suited to the people. They lived on, on sufferance only, till a faith, which to the Arabs should be the more living one, should sweep them away." "The turn of Arabia came"—to use an expression of Voltaire—and came when it did because the aspirant Mohammed was sufficiently clear-sighted to descry in the social and religious state of his countrymen the prepared foundation upon which to effect a mighty political revolution, which should be lasting because that it at the same time was a radical social revolution.

It is not necessary to the object of the present treatise that we take any positive side as to the prophet's sincerity—whether, as Dr. Draper alleges, that Mohammed was the victim of mental hallucination, or, as others assert, that he was a conscious impostor. Possibly it might be said, both of Mohammed and Swedenborg, that a long-continued contemplation or meditation would be very likely to engender hallucination. It cannot, we think, be denied that Mohammed used his pretended revelations from heaven to promote the success of his cause; and on the whole—after a careful examination of almost all that has been urged upon both sides of the question—we consider there is much truth in the estimate of this extraordinary man, in the following citation from the historian of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire":—"Of his last years, ambition was the ruling passion; and a politician will suspect that he [Mohammed] secretly smiled (the victorious impostor!) at the enthusiasm of his youth and the credulity of his proselytes." In a note to this last sentence Gibbon quotes a sentence from Voltaire, who said that Mohammed might be compared to a fakeer (Indian priest or vagrant monk) "who detaches the chain from his own neck by bestowing it on the ears of his *confrères*." "A philosopher will observe," continues the historian, "that *their* credulity and *his* success would tend more strongly to fortify the assurance of his divine mission, that his interest and religion were inseparably connected, and that his conscience would be soothed by the persuasion that he alone was absolved by the Deity from the obligation of positive and moral laws. If he retained any vestige of his native innocence, the sins of Mohammed may be allowed as an evidence of his sincerity. In the support of truth, the arts of fraud and fiction may be deemed less criminal; and he would have started at the foulness of the means had he not been satisfied of the importance and justice of the end." (Gibbon, "Decline and Fall," chap. l.)

In acknowledging, as we here do, that the world is greatly indebted to Mohammedanism, we must premise that the debt is more immediately due to the Khalifs or successors of the Prophet. The religion taught by Mohammed was extremely anthropomorphic. His one Supreme God is but little more than a huge extra-terrestrial man. Only in after years, when Greek philosophy and science had been resuscitated and re-invigorated under the beneficent sway

of the Khalifs, did the Mohammedans become entitled to the gratitude of mankind.

It is here our duty to digress a little from our more immediate object, to glance at the chief causes which prepared the way for the triumph of Islam. On the 27th of November, 602, the Emperor Maurice and his children were barbarously murdered by the inhuman Phocas, an obscure centurion. Although Pope Gregory, when the intelligence of the murder reached Rome, asked God to strengthen the hands of Phocas—in return for which the usurper readily conceded the Papal supremacy—the King of Persia, Chosroes, was filled with indignation at the death of one who had formerly befriended him when in exile. Chosroes at once prepared for war, but before a sword had been drawn in the contest Heraclius, Exarch of Africa, had dethroned Phocas and caused him to be beheaded. Chosroes, however, animated by deadly hostility to Christianity, led his army across the Euphrates, took Antioch, Cæsarea, Damascus, and Jerusalem, burnt the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and sent the "true cross," as a token of the victory of Magianism, to Persia. Everywhere the Christians were horror-stricken and in despair. Subsequently—after a brief interval of peace—Heraclius succeeded in recovering the honour he had individually lost; but even had he been ten times more successful, the tarnished prestige of Christianity could never be restored. Draper vividly delineates the amazement which filled the minds of the Christians in the East at beholding the insolent and sacrilegious triumph of the Persians: "The heavens should have rolled asunder, the earth should have opened her abysses, the sword of the Almighty should have flashed in the sky, the fate of Sennacherib should have been repeated." ("Conflict," p. 77.) "Should have been," perhaps; ought to have been, thought the astounded Christians; but most decidedly no divine intervention occurred, even when the "true cross" was sacrilegiously torn from the custody of the true believers. The immediate result of all this was to weaken popular credulity; the faith of the Asiatic, African, and Syrian Christians was changed into incredulity—in a word, the harvest was sown which the proselytes of the hitherto despised "camel-driver of Mecca" were at no distant period to reap.

Having succeeded in enforcing submission to his authority throughout Arabia, Mohammed contemplated the

invasion of the neighbouring countries. He had, undoubtedly, watched and properly estimated the effect produced by the victories of Chosroes, and deemed that he himself might even more easily overthrow the enfeebled armies of the Christian Emperor. Death, however, was first in the field, and it was left to the Khalifs, or successors of the founder of Islam, to carry out his legacy of conquest, to prostrate the strong places of the Christian religion, and to alter the faith of millions of human beings by proffering the dread alternative of "the Koran or the Sword!"

We can here only briefly recapitulate the successive invasions of the Saracens, their extraordinary perseverance in attacking every Christian or Pagan country within their reach, and the success which crowned their efforts. Before the victorious arms of Khaled, Syria and Asia Minor were obliged to yield, and the Khalif Omar rode a conqueror into the city of Jerusalem, mounted upon a red camel. Phœnicia and its ports were seized, and the Saracens for the first time in history were seen acting as sailors, in fleets destined to convey their victorious arms to Cyprus, Rhodes, and the Cyclades. In turn Persia was overrun, and "the second great city of Christendom," as Draper properly calls Alexandria, "the city of Athanasius and Arius, and Cyril; the city that had imposed Trinitarian ideas and Mariolatry on the Church," was compelled to fall beneath the efforts of the disciples of Mohammed when they invaded Egypt. From the historic Nile, fraught with memories of many a thousand years, the tide of conquest rolled on through northern Africa, until Akbah proudly drove his horse into the waters of the Atlantic, opposite the Canaries, avowing that, had not the ocean arrested his progress, he would have gone on to the remote West in the cause of the unity of the holy name of God. Then came the invasion of Europe, the result being that the whole of the Spanish Peninsula became subject to Saracen rule. Beyond the Pyrenees went Abderahman, defeating two strong Christian armies, and in 732 the Saracen general was met face to face at Tours, near the Loire, by Charles Martel, the valiant illegitimate son of Pepin, King of the Franks. During seven days the terrible conflict lasted; but the extraordinary valour and strength of the Germans and Franks, to whom the noise and tumult of battle had ever been the most pleasing music, triumphed over the numbers and discipline of the hitherto all-conquering

Saracens. Abderahman himself lost his life, and the Arabs secured their safety by a timely retreat. We find Gibbon indulging (chap. lii.) in the following speculation upon the extraordinary conquests of the Mohammedans: "A victorious line of march had been prolonged above a thousand miles, from the rock of Gibraltar to the banks of the Loire; the repetition of an equal space would have carried the Saracens to the confines of Poland and the Highlands of Scotland; the Rhine is not more impassable than the Nile or Euphrates, and the Arabian fleet might have sailed without a naval combat into the mouth of the Thames. Perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mahomet."

It does not fall within our limits to allude to the subsequent intestine divisions which finally led to the establishment of the Khalifates—Bagdad, Cairoan, and Cordova—nor can we advert to the sectarian differences by which the religion of Mohammed was, like all other religions, divided and more or less weakened. To these divisions the Christian Church owes its very existence to-day. "Unity," says Draper ("Conflict," p. 99), "in Mohammedan political action was at an end, and Christendom found its safeguard, not in supernatural help, but in the quarrels of the rival potentates. To internal animosities foreign pressures were eventually added; and Arabism, which had done so much for the intellectual advancement of the world, came to an end when the Turks and the Berbers attained to power."

The splendour and magnificence of the Khalifates may be somewhat comprehended from the following summary of a part of the fifty-second chapter of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall":—The city of Bagdad was founded by Almansor, on the eastern bank of the river Tigris: "the double wall was of a circular form; and such was the rapid increase of a capital, now dwindled to a provincial town, that the funeral of a popular saint might be attended by eight hundred thousand men and sixty thousand women of Bagdad and the adjacent villages.....After his wars and buildings Almansor left behind him in gold and silver about thirty millions sterling." The Arabic historian Abulfeda thus describes the reception of a Greek ambassador:—"The Kaliph's whole army.....was under arms..... a body of one hundred and sixty thousand men. His

State officers.....stood near him in splendid apparel, their belts glittering with gold and gems.....Nor was the palace itself less splendid, in which were hung up thirty-eight thousand pieces of tapestry, twelve thousand five hundred of which were of silk embroidered with gold. The carpets on the floor were twenty-two thousand." Let the intelligent reader compare this with the condition of Christian Europe at the same period, and remember that the magnificence of the Khalif could only have proceeded from commercial activity, constant and well-regulated trade, and the steady pursuit of industry among his people. About this time the majority of French and English houses "were of wood daubed with clay, and thatched with straw or reeds. They had no windows.....the luxury of a carpet was unknown; some straw, scattered in the room, supplied its place. There were no chimneys; the smoke.....escaped through the roof.....Men, women, and children slept in the same apartment.....the bed was usually a bag of straw, a wooden log served as a pillow. Personal cleanliness was utterly unknown; great officers of State.....swarmed with vermin.....The streets had no sewers; they were without pavement or lamps." (Draper, pp. 264—5). In Spain the Ommiade Khalifs were no less bounteous and magnificent. "Three miles from Cordova, in honour of his favourite sultana, the third and greatest of the Abdalrahmans constructed the city, palace, and gardens of Zehra." (Gibbon, as above.) It was twenty-five years in building, cost more than three millions of English pounds, employed the energies of the most eminent artists, architects, and sculptors, and was embellished by twelve hundred pillars of foreign marble. The ruins of Moorish architecture yet remain to testify to the world how immeasurably superior to the slothful, superstitious, semi-barbarous Spaniard of to-day was the enlightened, civilised, scientific Arabian.

There is without doubt something extraordinary in the conquests of the Arabs. Little wonder that the children of the desert saw in this rapid progress the finger of Allah! We have previously (page 540) pointed out how that the Christians of Syria grew incredulous when they saw the arms of the Magian Chosroes on every side triumphant. To the Oriental mind success is the true test of every system, political or religious. Tried by this touchstone, the doctrines of the Prophet came home to the bosom of the "true believer" with a vivid force of which we can have no

adequate conception; and he became firmly convinced that with the aid of the Koran he could eventually conquer the world. A great scholar has said of this book of the Prophet that it is a volume "by the aid of which the Arabs conquered a world greater than that of Alexander the Great, greater than that of Rome, and in as many tens of years as the latter had wanted hundreds to accomplish her conquests; by the aid of which they, alone of all the Shemites, came to Europe as kings, whither the Phœnicians had come as tradesmen, and the Jews as fugitives or captives; came to Europe to hold up, together with these fugitives, the light to Humanity; they alone, while darkness lay around, to raise up the wisdom and knowledge of Hellas from the dead, to teach philosophy, medicine, astronomy, and the golden art of song to the West as to the East, to stand at the cradle of modern science, and to cause us late epigoni for ever to weep over the day when Granada fell." (Deutsch, in art. on "Islam," *Quarterly Review*, No. 254, p. 344, as quoted by Syed Ameer Ali, pp. 332-3.)

Have we, then, Englishmen and Europeans "to weep over the day when Granada" and the Moorish power fell before the power of Christendom? Have we cause to regret the downfall of an authority which Christian priests have for many centuries represented as a curse, permitted by the Deity to achieve a temporary triumph over Christian princes, potentates, and people in punishment for their sins? Do we really owe anything to the religion established by "the camel-driver of Mecca"? Are the so-called Christian nations of the world indebted to aught besides our Bible and our "Gospel-truths" for any civilisation they possess, any learning, any knowledge, any freedom either of body or mind?

To properly understand the nature of the influence exercised upon Europe by Mohammedanism, we must entertain a clear idea of the progress of Christian monasticism and of its immediate results. The one grand object of the monk was to separate himself as far as possible from the earth and the things belonging thereunto. Spreading north, south, east, and west, the system originally confined to Egypt and Syria acted like a virulent cancer upon the lives and habits of the people. Instead of solitary hermits and anchorites, content to dwell in caves and to perpetrate frightful acts of self-torture, the monastery was established. In the East the monks were idle, good-for-nothing fanatics;

in the West labour was everywhere the chief occupation of the cœnobites. But intellectual pursuits were not encouraged until a comparatively late epoch in monastic history, and we are not surprised to find that before the Mohammedan invasion there was not in the whole of Europe any trace of science to be found. Had the Arabs continued their reverence for the very letter of the Koran, had they continued to believe that man ought to know nothing besides what was contained in the Koran, they would have been nothing more than a barbarous horde of warriors. The Koran says: "The words of thy Lord are perfect, in truth and justice; there is none who can change his words: he both heareth and knoweth." (Sale's translation, chap. vi.) We learn from the "Preliminary Discourse" of Sale that, although at first some of the successors of Mohammed were desirous of maintaining the notion that the Koran had been created, and that many of those by whom the contrary was asserted were imprisoned, whipped, and even, in some instances, put to death ("Prelim. Disc.," sec. iii.), yet that ultimately wider and more rational ideas were accepted by the doctors and the people. No science can flourish where restrictions in the shape of "God-given" books are received, except the utmost degree of hermeneutical license be allowed by the priesthood, or the custodians of the revelation.

The following excellent review of the Koran is taken from the celebrated work of the American scholar and scientist, Dr. Draper, entitled "The Intellectual Development of Europe," vol. i., pp. 329—331: "Arabian influence .....rested essentially on an intellectual basis, the value of which it is needful for us to consider. The Koran, which is that basis, has exercised a great control over the destinies of mankind.....Such a work, noble as may be its origin, must not refuse, but court, the test of natural philosophy, regarding it not as an antagonist, but as its best support. As years pass on, and human science becomes more exact and more comprehensive, its conclusions must be found in unison therewith. When occasion arises, it should furnish us at least the foreshadowings of the great truths discovered by astronomy and geology, not offering for them the wild fictions of earlier ages, inventions of the infancy of man. It should tell us how suns and worlds are distributed in infinite space, and how, in their successions, they come forth in limitless time.....Tried by such a

standard the Koran altogether fails. In its philosophy it is incomparably inferior to the writings of Chakia Mouni, the founder of Buddhism; in its science it is absolutely worthless. On speculative or doubtful things it is copious enough; but in the exact, where a test can be applied to it, it totally fails. Its astronomy, cosmogony, physiology, are so puerile as to invite our mirth." In these obvious defects, however, the Koran is but on a par with the Hebrew Bible, and we can but admire the great liberality of sentiment which induced the Arab mind to shake off the puerilities of Mohammed's revelation, retaining only those high and lofty moral precepts for which the Koran is so remarkable. "The great Mohammedan philosophers," says Draper (Ibid, p. 336), "simply accepting the doctrine of the oneness of God as the only thing of which man can be certain, look upon all the rest as idle fables, having, however, this political use, that they furnish contention, and therefore occupation, to disputatious sectarians, and consolation to illiterate minds."

Thus we see that at no long period after the decease of Mohammed the Arabian intellect was free to develop itself in every direction. Unlike the Hebrews and Christians, the Mohammedans were not restricted in the field of scientific research. Further on we shall behold the Arabians extending their intellectual researches into every branch of human knowledge, taking science—practical and speculative—at the points where the Greek intellect had been compelled to abandon it, and enriching everything with which it was concerned.

BIRTH OF SCIENCE AMONG THE ARABS.

The rigid, unbending fatalism of the Mohammedans had been greatly modified during their wars. The only physicians known to the early adherents of Islam were Jews; and Draper points out ("Conflict," p. 107) how that the skill of the disciples of Æsculapius mitigated "by degrees the sternness of predestination.....and it was admitted that in individual life there is an effect due to free-will; that by his voluntary acts man may, within certain limits, determine his own course." The Khalif Al-Mamun had been educated to believe that the earth was a large flat surface, bounded on each of its four sides by lofty mountains, which in their turn did good service by supporting the firmament. Beyond this firmament the Koran places

heaven, which consists of seven portions, in the uppermost of which is the habitation of God. It chanced that Al-Mamun had heard of an old opinion which gave to the earth a globular form; and the desire to know something of its dimensions induced the khalif to order his geometricians to measure a degree of an imaginary great circle drawn round the world. Sacerdotalism intervened in the person of Takyuddin, an eminent exponent of the Koran. He vigorously protested against the unholy design of Al-Mamun, "declaring that God would assuredly punish him for presumptuously interrupting the devotions of the faithful by encouraging and diffusing a false and Atheistical philosophy among them." (Ibid, p. 109.) Who can say what mighty consequences were dependent upon this struggle between the khalif and the priest? Had the former deferred to the forebodings of the latter, there would have grown up among the Arabs a narrow spirit of religious bigotry which would have for ever stood in the way of scientific investigation, and Islam and its priests would have only served to strengthen the shackles which had under the Papacy so long enshrouded Europe in mental bondage. Undeterred, however, by the fulminations of Takyuddin, the khalif persevered, and from that moment—to use the words of a learned Mohammedan, Syed Ameer-Ali ("Life of Mohammed," p. 341)—"the vicegerents of Mohammed allied themselves to the cause of civilisation, and assisted in the growth of Freethought and Free Inquiry." All honour to Al-Mamun for this! Surely the civilised world should hold him in veneration who, "while Christian Europe had placed learning under the ban of persecution; while the Vicar of Christ set the example of stifling the infant lispings of Freethought; while the priests led the way in consigning to the flames myriads of inoffensive beings for mere aberration of reason or simple differences of opinion" (Ibid, 340—1), thus resolutely fought and won a battle in which the rival standards were those of ignorant superstition and of revived science! Bending at once to the inevitable, the doctors of the law called to mind "two of the most famous traditional sayings" of the Prophet, viz., that which affirms that "the ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyr;" and that in which Mohammed says: "It is related that God created Reason, and it was the most beautiful being in his creation—and God said to it, 'I have not created anything better or more perfect or

more beautiful than thou, blessings will come down on mankind on thy account, and they will be judged according to the use they make of thee.'" (Ibid, note.) The era of Free Inquiry had set in, the hands of the horologe of progress were again set in motion, the fire had been kindled which was ere long to throw light upon the long-darkened fields and paths of Knowledge. Nothing is more remarkable than the rapidity of this great revolution in Mohammedanism. A hundred years had scarcely transpired after the decease of Mohammed before Arabian literature began to be enriched. The predecessors of that Al-Mamun to whom we have just referred had established schools throughout their dominions, had encouraged translations from the Greek philosophers, had done their utmost to promote the study of astronomy, jurisprudence, and medicine. The great and learned Al-Mamun—in the years 813—32 P.C. —devoted every energy to the encouragement of science. Under his benignant auspices and fostering care the city of Bagdad was enriched with museums, observatories, libraries, and academies; and so successful were his exertions that Draper (p. 111) calls his khalifate "the Augustan age of Asiatic learning." The diligence of the khalif in this pursuit of learning—assuredly the noblest pursuit open to the potentates and rulers among men—may be best described in the words of Dr. Draper: "For the establishment and extension of the public libraries, books were sedulously collected. Thus the Khalif Al-Mamun is reported to have brought into Bagdad hundreds of camel-loads of manuscripts. In a treaty he made with the Greek emperor, Michael III., he stipulated that one of the Constantinople libraries should be given up to him. Among the treasures he thus acquired was the treatise of Ptolemy on the mathematical construction of the heavens. He had it forthwith translated into Arabic, under the title of 'Almagest.'" ("Conflict," p. 112.)

Here we must not omit to mention the Fatimite Library of Cairo (in Egypt), with its one hundred thousand bound volumes and six thousand five hundred scientific manuscript treatises. Draper ("Intell. Develop.," vol. ii., p. 29) says of the Spanish Moors, that their conquest of Spain was, almost immediately it began, "a brilliant career." Their Khalifs of Cordova began to emulate those of Bagdad "as patrons of learning, and set an example of refinement strongly contrasting with the condition of the native Euro-

pean princes. Cordova, under their administration, at its highest point of prosperity, boasted of more than two hundred thousand houses, and more than a million of inhabitants. After sunset, a man might walk through it in a straight line for ten miles by the light of the public lamps. Seven hundred years after this time there was not so much as one public lamp in London." Toledo, Granada, Seville, and other cities, almost rivalled Cordova in magnificence, comfort, and grandeur. Not alone for the priceless boon of free inquiry are we indebted to these enemies of the Christian Church. "To these Saracens" we owe "many of our personal comforts. Religiously cleanly, it was not possible for them to clothe, according to the fashion of the natives of Europe, in a garment unchanged till it dropped to pieces of itself, a loathsome mass of vermin, stench, and rags. No Arab who had been a minister of State, or the associate or antagonist of a sovereign, would have offered such a spectacle as the corpse of Thomas à Becket when his hair-cloth shirt was removed. They taught us the use of the often-changed and often-washed under-garment of linen or cotton, which still passes among ladies under its old Arabic name." (Ibid, p. 32.) After describing the great library of Cairo, Gibbon says (chap. lii.): "Yet this collection must appear moderate if we can believe that the Ommiades of Spain had formed a library of six hundred thousand volumes, forty-four of which were employed in the mere catalogue. Their capital, Cordova, with the adjacent towns .....had given birth to more than three hundred writers, and above seventy public libraries were opened in the cities of the Andalusian kingdom.

We must here pay a deserved tribute to the real originators of Arabian science—the Jews. "They were our factors and bankers before we knew how to read," says Cabanis, "they were also our first physicians." The Jewish physicians of Alexandria came to acquire extraordinary influence over the Arabs who overran Egypt. This, of course, was a necessary consequence of their profession and of their learning.

Draper says ("Intell. Develop.," vol. ii., p. 116) that they "inoculated the Arabs with learning on their first meeting with them in Alexandria, obtaining a private and personal influence with many of the khalifs, and from that central point of power giving an intellectual character to the entire Saracenic movement.....The intellectual activity of the

Asiatic and African Jews soon communicated an impulse to those of Europe."

The liberty of the Jewish nation had, as the reader doubtless knows, long become a thing of the past. Scattered throughout the world, they had learned how very great was the fog or night of ignorance in which the world was enveloped. The strangest and most outrageous opinions were current throughout Europe regarding the Hebrews. They were said to be sorcerers, wizards, devil-worshippers, crucifiers of Christian children; and a variety of evil deeds were popularly ascribed to them. An early Italian novelist, Giovanni Fiorentino, who flourished in the fourteenth century, has portrayed the general Catholic sentiment with respect to the Jews. It is said that Shakspere was indebted to Fiorentino for the main plot of "The Merchant of Venice," and ancient ballad poetry—the only true mirror of barbaric nations and their habits and modes of thought—is replete with stories of Jewish cruelty and general "uncanniness." The real truth, however, is that the Jews were for ages the only existing depositaries of science. On the principle that "everything unknown is taken as magnificent," or miraculous, the Jews were regarded as conjurors by all devout Christians. Upon this same principle, Friar Roger Bacon was adjudged to imprisonment as a wizard by popular clamour and by superstitious fear. Draper (Ibid) notes the titles given by early Jewish scientists to their works, and he finds a proof of their wisdom even in the simplicity of these titles. "Thus," he says, "Isaac Ben Soleiman.....wrote 'On Fevers,' 'On Medicine,' 'On Food and Remedies,' 'On the Pulse,' 'On Philosophy,' 'On Melancholy,' 'An Introduction to Logic.' The simplicity of these titles displays an intellectual clearness and precision of thought which have ever been shown by the Israelites." The Saracens became the patrons of the Jews. Both were united upon one common ground of monotheism or Unitarianism; both were detested by united—or, rather, divided—Christendom; both alike scorned and hated the Christian polytheists and "rag-worshippers"—the one hating with the remembrance of centuries of cruel contumely and oppression, the other with proud and scornful memories of the easy triumph of Mohammed's disciples over the emasculated votaries of Christ. Wherever we find the arms of the Saracens triumphant, there of a certainty shall we find the Hebrew pioneer of science. Even the

Normans of Apulia were glad to do honour to the learned Saracen-Jew, and we find that Robert Guiscard, Count of Apulia, "could discern the merit and value of a philosopher." (Gibbon, ch. lvi.) "After a pilgrimage of thirty-nine years, Constantine, an African Christian, returned from Bagdad a master of the language and learning of the Arabians; and Salerno was enriched by the practice, the lessons, and the writings of the pupil of Avicenna." (Ibid.)

Thanks to the Jews, medical colleges were established throughout the Saracen dominions, after which "the progress of medicine among the Jews was very rapid.....A long list of eminent names might be extracted from the tenth and eleventh centuries.....Already it was apparent that the Saracenic movement would aid in developing the intelligence of barbarian Western Europe through Hebrew physicians." ("Intell. Develop.," vol. ii., p. 117.)

Thus we see that Mohammedanism had altogether succeeded in throwing off the shackles sought to be imposed by Takyuddin, in the time of Al-Mamun. We find the Saracens allying themselves to the Hebrews, and the two combining to enlighten the human mind. Having shown the inception of this great intellectual movement, we have now to show how, and in what direction, the Saracen philosophers pursued their investigations, and to delineate the ultimate conclusions to which they led.

ARABIAN SCIENCE: ITS NATURE AND RESULTS.

Ignorance and superstition are rarely, if ever, found apart. Conversely, we may venture to predicate that superstition can only exist where ignorance is in the ascendant. Science means knowledge, and the cultivation of science is, therefore, always sure to be accompanied by the decay of superstition. We have already taken a retrospective glance at the state of Europe before the Saracenic invasion. We have seen how that the European mind was, to all intents and purposes, barbaric; the only places in which we look for anything beyond mere semi-savage aggregations of men being the somnolent, pious, and ascetic monastic establishments. Suddenly, and altogether unexpectedly, the Christian world found itself shaken almost to pieces by a new and strange element, of which sleeping Christendom had no previous cognisance. Soon after the introduction of this foreign element, it became, as it were, metamorphosed, the

warriors of the Koran becoming transmuted into the soldiers of physical science.

The first place in Arabian science we accord to medicine, not so much because of its importance as because that it was the first branch of knowledge which the Arabs successfully cultivated. We have already alluded to the Jews; Solomon Ben Isaac was among the foremost of these in reducing medicine to a regular system. In the same century he was rivalled by Ebn Zohr, a doctor of great eminence residing in Seville, who wrote in Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac—his object being the improvement of the whole Jewish and Mohammedan world—treatises on fevers, and on the remedies and treatment of various diseases. "In singular contrast with the superstitious notions of the times, he possessed a correct view of the morbific nature of marsh-miasm. He was followed by Ben Ezra, a Jew of Toledo, who was at once a physician, philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, critic, poet. He travelled all over Europe and Asia, being held in captivity for some time in India. Among his medical writings was a work on theoretical and practical medicine, entitled 'Book of Proofs.'" ("Intell. Develop.," vol. ii., p. 119.) In course of time, the Jewish physician found his way north of the Pyrenees, for not even the anathemas and fulminations of the Catholic ecclesiastics could prevent the territorial magnates of France from wishing to be cured of their diseases. It was an age of hard blows and of appeals to the sword, and, however effectual the prayers and intercessions of the clergy were believed to be, there were many of the Frankish and Norman nobility who followed the example of William de Montpellier in authorising all men, without distinction of religion or race, to practise and profess medicine and surgery within his territories. "Spain, though she had thus lost many of her learned men, still continued to produce others of whom she had reason to be proud. Moussa Ben Maimon, known all over Europe as Maimonides, was recognised by his countrymen as 'the Doctor, the Great Sage, the Glory of the West, the Light of the East, second only to Moses.' He is often designated by the four initials R.M.B.M., that is, Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon, or briefly Rambam.....He was born at Cordova A.D. 1135, and, while yet young, wrote commentaries on the Talmuds.....and also a work on the Calendar; but, embracing Mohammedanism, he emigrated to Egypt, and there became physician to the celebrated Sultan

Saladin. Among his works are medical aphorisms, derived from former Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic sources; an abridgement of Galen; and of his original treatises, which were very numerous, may be mentioned those, 'On Hemorrhoids,' 'On Poisons and Antidotes,' 'On Asthma,' 'On the Preservation of Health,'—the latter being written for the benefit of the son of Saladin—'On the Bites of Venomous Animals,'—written by order of the Sultan—'On Natural History.' His 'Moreh Nevochim,' or 'Teacher of the Perplexed,' was an attempt to reconcile the doctrines of the Old Testament with reason. In addition to these, he had a book on Idolatry, and one on Christ. Besides Maimonides, the Sultan had another physician, Ebn Djani, the author of a work on the medical topography of the city of Alexandria. From the biographies of these learned men of the twelfth century *it would seem that their religious creed hung lightly upon them.*" ("Intell. Develop.," vol. ii., p. 120.) This last sentence of Draper's, a part of which we have ventured to italicise, is a very pregnant one. The same writer goes on to show how that, long before this Maimonides, the Jews and Arabs had been "dabbling in Freethinking speculations." Altogether unmindful of the doctrine that God rules all things by his word, Aben Tybbon prepared the way for future astronomical speculations—for "that branch of science which has drawn upon itself, in later years, so much opprobrium" (Ibid, p. 121)—by writing a book on the real causes by whose operation the sea was prevented from overrunning the land. No wonder that in after years the nominal Christian Alphonso of Castile spoke with contemptuous sarcasm of the defect in God's celestial arrangements manifest upon the Ptolemaic hypothesis. The Christian king's physician was an Arabian-Jew, Mascha, famous for his calculation of certain astronomical tables which are known as the Alphonsine Tables. "The physician of a Christian prince was very often the rival of his confessor" (Ibid), and therefore we need not doubt that among these princes the influence of the Freethinkers, in whose knowledge so much confidence was reposed, must necessarily have been very great. True to their instincts, the Catholic ecclesiastics endeavoured by force to stop the progress of the Mohammedan-Jewish professors of medicine. Councils, or rather Synods, were held at Beziers in 1246 and at Alby in 1254, at both of which decrees were enacted forbidding all Christians

from having recourse to non-Christian physicians. These intolerant measures, however, were far from being attended with the success intended, and in 1301 the Faculty of Paris endeavoured to enforce a decree by which it was hoped to prevent the Jews from practising in France. This action was prompted by the appointment of a Hebrew physician to the regency of the Faculty of Montpellier in the preceding year. This regent, Profatius, was a skilful mathematician and astronomer, and acquired a high reputation as a calculator of latitudes and longitudes. He also demonstrated the obliquity of the ecliptic, and is said by Draper (Ibid, p. 122), to have been honourably mentioned by the great Copernicus. In 1306 the animosity of the University of Paris had attained its culminating point. It was decreed that all the Jews in France should be banished. "'It was,' 'says the historian of this event, 'a most revolting spectacle to see so many learned men, who had adorned and benefited France, proscribed wanderers without a country or any asylum. Some of them expired of grief upon the road. Abba Mari gives in his work heartrending details of the expulsion of the Jews from Montpellier, at the head of whom were the professors and doctors of the faculty.'" (Ibid.) But the pioneers of heresy had accomplished their work. They had planted on the north of the Pyrenean sierra the seeds of unorthodox ideas, which were sure to grow up into a giant tree, beneath the shadows of which the lovers of intellectual freedom should rally for evermore. "They had sapped the credulity of the higher classes in Europe, and taught them to turn away from the supernatural." (Ibid.) These persecuted Hebrew doctors had brought Science and Freethought to a people that had "long sat in darkness" and in "the shadow" of a mental death; "out of the Spanish peninsula there had come..... an intellectual influence, which reached the populace under the form of a fresh and pleasing literature, and the better classes by novel, but unorthodox, ideas.....The Jews had been its carriers." (Ibid.) It behoves us now to examine into the nature of the ideas which had, by means of the Jews, been transplanted from the Saracens to the Christian populations.

THE REVOLT OF PHILOSOPHY.

The first philosopher who discovered a discrepancy between science and revelation was the Saracen Averroes,

of Cordova. Like his predecessor, Avicenna, of Bokhara (Tartary), he was a proficient in medicine, mathematics, and astronomy, and was deeply versed in the philosophy of Aristotle. He had been educated by the most learned scholars of the peninsula, his father being at the time of his birth (1149) the mufti or chief judge and priest of the province of Andalusia. Under his father he became a master of jurisprudence and the Koran, and was well trained in theology, philosophy, and medicine by the most eminent instructors of the period. At first he appears to have been exceedingly devout, having been attracted towards the Ash'ari sect, one of whose principles or articles of belief was that God, as being the cause of all things, was also the originator of every human action. Besides this, the Ash'aris professed to believe in free-will, though how they contrived to reconcile these two conflicting doctrines is beyond our ability to state. Having succeeded his father as mufti of Andalusia, Averroes gave public lectures in Cordova, soon after which he was appointed mufti of Mauritania (Morocco). He was, however, accused before Mansur, the khalif, by no less a person than the son of one of his preceptors, of diffusing heretical notions. His heresy arose from a well-intended design of effecting a reconciliation between the Koran and the doctrines of Aristotle. He taught the existence of a vast, all-pervading spiritual influence, which influence is everywhere diffused throughout the universe. Of this existence every individual human soul is a component or integral portion. Quoting from M. Renan's "Historical Essay on Averroism," Dr. Draper writes as follows:—"This system supposes that at the death of an individual his intelligent principle or soul no longer possesses a separate existence, but returns to, or is absorbed in, the universal mind, the active intelligence, the mundane soul, which is God; from whom, indeed, it had originally emanated or issued forth. The universal, or active, or objective intellect is uncreated, impassible, incorruptible, has neither beginning nor end; nor does it increase as the number of individual souls increases. It is altogether separate from matter. It is, as it were, a cosmic principle. This oneness of the active intellect, or reason, is the essential principle of the Averroistic theory." ("Conflict," p. 139.)

Averroism made rapid progress in Spain. Its founder was, in his old age, according to Draper (Ibid, p. 142),

persecuted by the usurper Almansor, who hoped to propitiate the rigid, orthodox Mussulmans. This disgrace to the khalifate even went so far as to burn all the philosophical books and manuscripts in his predecessor's library —an act of Vandalism worthy of the early Alexandrian bishops, but one too futile to arrest the march of science. During the life of Averroes thousands of students from France, Germany, Britain, and other European nations flocked to Andalusia, "the paradise of the world." By these mediums the philosophy of the mufti was disseminated throughout the non-Saracen countries. At first sight it would almost appear as though in this system there was little or nothing of a nature to shock the orthodox Christian mind. Draper, however, very forcibly explains how it was that Averroism became identified, by Christians and synagogic Jews, with Infidelity. He says: "Into Italy, Germany, England, Averroism had silently made its way. It found favour in the eyes of the Franciscans, and a focus in the University of Paris. By very many of the leading minds it had been accepted. But at length the Dominicans .....sounded an alarm. They said it destroys all personality, conducts to fatalism, and renders inexplicable the difference and progress of individual intelligences. The declaration that there is but one intellect is an error subversive of the merits of the saints, it is an assertion that there is no difference among men. What! is there no difference between the holy soul of Peter and the damned soul of Judas? Are they identical? Averroes in this his blasphemous doctrine denies creation, providence, revelation, the Trinity, the efficacy of prayers, of alms, and of litanies; he disbelieves in the resurrection and immortality; he places the *summum bonum* in mere pleasure." (Ibid, p. 143.) We must give the Dominicans credit for their skill in being thus able to discern in the teaching of the Cordovan the first indications of scientific unbelief. They were undoubtedly correct in their estimate of the new philosophy. The consequences they anticipated would most indubitably result from the acceptance of Averroism. That they were being widely disseminated among Christians the Dominicans were well aware, and spreading all the more surely because of the favour accorded to them by the Franciscans—the rivals of the Dominicans. At that time a book was in general circulation entitled "Concerning the Three Impostors"—Moses, Christ, and Mohammed—and the work

was supposed to have been originally written by Averroes.

In 1255 Pope Alexander IV. thought it time to interpose his authority against the spread of Averroism. He commanded the celebrated Albertus Magnus to write against it, the consequence being the production of a book aimed against "The Unity of the Intellect." But the labours of Albertus dwindle into insignificance when compared with those of Thomas Aquinas. Henceforth the Catholic world became divided as completely as the wedge divides the trunk of the prostrate oak. On the one hand, it became customary to ascribe the ever-increasing Infidelity of Europe to the doctrines of Averroes—an idea by no means improbable; on the other, there were those who maintained that those doctrines were reconcileable to the orthodox faith. The Dominicans, into whose hands had been thrust the inquisitorial power, went about imprisoning, burning, and slaying all whom they suspected of holding in any degree the doctrines of "the Devil of Cordova;' while, strange to say, there were to be found in the Catholic Universities many who defended the theory of the Universal Intellect.

"Under the inspiration of the Dominicans, Averroes became to the Italian painters the emblem of unbelief. Many of the Italian towns had pictures or frescoes of the Day of Judgment and of Hell. In these Averroes not unfrequently appears. Thus in one at Pisa he figures with Arius, Mohammed, and Antichrist. In another he is represented as overthrown by St. Thomas. He had become an essential element in the triumphs of the great Dominican doctor. He continued thus to be familiar to the Italian painters until the sixteenth century. His doctrines were maintained in the University of Padua until the seventeenth. .....In Upper Italy Averroism long maintained its ground. It was so fashionable in high Venetian society that every gentleman felt constrained to profess it. At length the Church took decisive action against it. The Lateran Council, A.D. 1512, condemned the abettors of these detestable doctrines to be held as Heretics and Infidels..... The late Vatican Council has anathematised them. Notwithstanding that stigma, it is to be borne in mind that these opinions are held to be true by a majority of the human race." (Ibid, p. 151.)

We have thus seen philosophic Pantheism penetrating

into and seriously dividing the orthodox Christian camp. We have now to behold it disrupting in no slight degree the older dispensation alleged to have been given by God to Moses.

While Maimonides (see ante, p. 552) had excited the wonder and obtained the approbation of the whole learned world, the orthodox Jews forgot that they once termed him "a second Moses," so violently prejudiced were they against Averroism, which Maimonides had acknowledged his belief in. It was everywhere echoed among the Jews that Maimonides was a renegade from the observance of the Jewish law; "that he had abandoned the faith of Abraham; had denied the possibility of creation, believed in the eternity of the world; had given himself up to the manufacture of Atheists; had deprived God of his attributes: made a vacuum of him; had declared him inaccessible to prayer, and a stranger to the government of the world." (Ibid, 144.) Some synagogues even went so far as to burn the works of the greatest Hebrew of the age. In spite of their zeal, however, the Jews became everywhere—at least in Christendom—identified with the new philosophy. We have already seen how greatly superior were the Jews to their protectors. For nearly four centuries—namely, from the tenth to the end of the thirteenth—they were the intellectual leaders of Europe. The Saracens treated them as equals, and did their utmost to encourage their love of study and scientific research. When, however, the Catholic power was again established in Navarre and Castile, the Jews were the first to suffer from the malignancy and cupidity of the Christian ecclesiastics. Freethought, however, is not alone indebted to the Mohammedans for its mental or metaphysical development. From their cultivation of astronomy the Mohammedans must have early learned broader and wider views of the universe than those they had acquired from the Koran. There has been nothing which has so materially affected the superstitions of mankind, nothing which has exercised so potent an influence upon those aggregations of law-observing men and women which we call society, as the revelations of astronomy.

"The thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns."

So wrote Tennyson, and the line has been often quoted by those who would limit the anti-Biblical nature of the "heavenly science" to the period when the views of Coper-

nicus were first promulgated. It is true that Mohammedan astronomy was based upon the Syntaxis of Ptolemy, which had been translated into Arabic by order of the Khalif Al-Mamun, under the title of Almagest. We know that the cardinal principle of this Ptolemaic system—that of the earth's being the centre of the universe—was wrong. But during the fourteen or fifteen centuries of its acceptance it was the only astronomical system known to men; and the whole of Christendom was occupied in the discussion of points of ecclesiastical discipline and in expositions of the Fathers, and had neither leisure nor desire to think of aught else, except as being the profane and blasphemous speculations of the ancient Pagans. "If by chance," says Draper ("Conflict," pp. 157—8), "a passing interest was taken in some astronomical question, it was at once settled by a reference to such authorities as the writings of Augustine or Lactantius, not by an appeal to the phenomena of the heavens. So great was the preference given to sacred over profane learning, that Christianity had been in existence fifteen hundred years, and had not produced a single astronomer." Draper shows how that, using the "Almagest" as a foundation, the Saracens were enabled to solve some of the most important astronomical problems. He points out how that, even in the time of Al-Mamun, his astronomers, appointed to measure a degree of longitude (see ante, p. 547), gave two hundred thousand Hashemite cubits as the length of the degree. Three hundred and sixty degrees, as every schoolboy ought to know, make one great circle; and, by means of this, the earth-measurers—geometricians in very earnest—of the khalif were enabled to give the total circumference of the earth as being "about twenty-four thousand of our miles, a determination not far from the truth." (Ibid, p. 109.) In addition to this they made planispheres, or charts of the heavens, giving to every visible star its proper position and apparent magnitude, and imposing names, the majority of which remain to our own time. The real length of the solar year was ascertained by them, and none the less certainly because they imagined the sun rotated around the earth instead of the earth around the sun. They also explained the phenomena of refraction, of the horizontal sun and moon; they also built the first astronomical observatory in Europe. From their zeal in pursuing the study of astronomy is due the invention of time-measurers and the pendulum, while they may

be said to be have been the first to make any advances in the experimental sciences. One result of their devotion to knowledge was the great increase and improvement that ensued in commerce and the arts of industry. Marsh lands were everywhere drained and arid plains irrigated; the poorer soils were enriched by necessary applications of manures; the cultivation of rice, coffee, and sugar was encouraged; and the husbandman was fostered and assisted by "the enactment of wise codes of rural laws." The ancient mines of Bœtica were again worked by willing hands; commerce grew active between the East and the West; old manufactures were resuscitated and re-invigorated; new manufactures grew up and were continually improved and extended. The most important result of their coming to Europe is to be discovered in the great diffusion of literature. Not only are we indebted to them for the manuals and treatises of science which they originated, still larger is our debt for the establishment of general literature, books of poetry, tales, romances, and moral disquisitions. It is only in the diffusion of literature that we have a complete guarantee for the permanence and extension of civilisation. Tradition may become corrupted—as we know from history that it ever has been—hieroglyphs and mural carvings may be hidden by the sands of the desert, or overturned and buried by invading hosts; but the thoughts of men and the lessons of history, written or printed upon the thin web of paper or the scroll of vellum, possess an enduring vitality, because of the facility by which they may be copied, and the ease by which they are transferred from hand to hand. The ancient Greeks could all learn the lessons of their dramatists, historians, and orators, because their noblest productions were periodically represented or read before assembled Greece at the Olympian Games; the Arabs, however, multiplied copies of their most important works, which were thus placed within the reach as well of the humblest labourer as of the Khalif himself. "In the libraries of the Arabians," writes Gibbon (chap. lii.), "as in those of Europe [*i.e.* modern Europe], the far greater part of the innumerable volumes were possessed only of local value or imaginary merit. [By this statement the historian merely intends to convey that the large majority of these books were not scientific. We, however, know too well how surely all books are agents of civilisation to depreciate works that were written rather

to amuse than to instruct in didactic science.] The shelves were crowded with orators and poets, whose style was adopted to the taste and manners of their countrymen; with general and partial histories, which each revolving generation supplied with a new harvest of persons and events; with codes and commentaries of jurisprudence .....with the interpreters of the Koran.....with.....polemics, mystics, scholastics, and moralists, the first or the last of writers, according to the different estimates of sceptics or believers. The works of speculation, or science, may be reduced to the four classes of philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and physic." Arabic scholars—well versed in the noblest and purest of languages, the Greek—were continually employed in translating the works of the Grecian philosophers, historians, and political orators. To their labours, and not—as is continually and wrongly asserted—to the assiduity of Christian monks, do we owe the preservation of the priceless heirlooms of antiquity. Thus we read that Honain, a physician of Bagdad, "was at the head of a school or manufacture of translations" (Ibid, in note), and it is said that the disciples or pupils of Honain translated the complete works of Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, Euclid, and others. There are, in fact, many ancient classical books, entirely wanting in the original, the sense of which has been preserved to us through Arabic versions. "Besides these," says Draper ("Conflict," p. 113), "there were works on all kinds of subjects—history, jurisprudence, politics, philosophy, biographies, not only of illustrious men, but also of celebrated horses and camels. These were issued without any censorship or restraint, though, in later times, works on theology required a license for publication. Books of reference abounded, geographical, statistical, medical, historical, dictionaries, and even abridgments or condensations of them, as the 'Encyclopædic Dictionary of all the Sciences,' by Mohammed Abu Abdallah. Much pride was taken in the purity and whiteness of the paper, in the skilful intermixture of variously-coloured inks, and in the illumination of titles by gilding or other adornments." To the ordinary European all these facts are unknown. They have been systematically ignored and kept in the background by those who were only too well gratified at finding their ignorant dupes accepting and giving credence to the wildest stories respecting the "worshippers of Mahound." The boasted toleration of to-day makes but a

sorry figure when compared with that of the Saracens. Every division of the Mohammedan world possessed its educational establishments, the major portion of which were richly endowed by their patrons. "The vizier of a sultan consecrated a sum of two hundred thousand pieces of gold to the foundation of a college at Bagdad, which he endowed with an annual revenue of fifteen thousand dinars. The fruits of instruction were communicated.....to six thousand disciples of every degree *from the son of the noble to that of the mechanic*—[the italics are ours]—a sufficient allowance was provided for the indigent scholars; and the merit or industry of the professors was repaid by adequate stipends." (Gibbon, chap. lii.) The boasted university establishments of Christianity have not yet succeeded—even if they have as yet attempted the task—in opening wide their doors to the son of the mechanic. As we have said, these colleges were to be found throughout the Mohammedan dominions. Syria, Egypt, Spain, Persia, Northern Africa, distant Tartary, all these possessed their temples of learning. We can readily enough imagine how that, after the time of Averroes, all these institutes became centres of Arabian Freethought. The Mohammedans allowed no "religious difficulty" to interfere in matters of education. They never dreamed—as did an English Prime Minister not long ago—of training the youth of one sect differently from those of another. They never deemed it necessary to permit their priesthood to superintend and revise the class-books of their students, as do the Roman Catholic clerics in Ireland, France, Spain, and the United States to-day. On the contrary, they permitted the principals and professors of their institutes to hold any or no religion, mindful of the noble sentiment which the historian Abulpharagius puts into the mouth of the Khalif Al-Mamun: "He was not ignorant that *they* are the elect of God, his best and most useful servants, whose lives are devoted to the improvement of their rational faculties. The mean ambition of the Chinese or the Turks may glory in the industry of their hands or the indulgence of their brutal appetites.....The teachers of wisdom are the true luminaries and legislators of a world which, without their aid, would again sink in ignorance and barbarism." (Ibid.) May we not, with Dr. Tyndall (in his Belfast Address), deplore the bigotry which has so long rendered the world oblivious of the great debt due to the Arabian intellect? Ages have rolled on down the stream of time, the

Saracen has been supplanted by the barbarous Turk, Christianity has apparently recovered from the great blow administered by the soldiers of the successors of Mohammed; but the example of liberty of speech, thought, and publication, afforded centuries since by the Arabians, the world has never yet exceeded; that example has only, within the memory of living man, begun to be imitated, in deference to the demands of a people beginning to appreciate advantages like those long ago possessed by the Saracens.

In the winter of 717—718, about fourteen years before the defeat of Abdalrahman at Tours, the second siege of Constantinople took place, the Saracens being commanded by Moslemah, brother of the Khalif Soliman. One hundred and twenty thousand men invested the city on the land side, while eighteen hundred galleys, manned by the indomitable sailors of Egypt and Phœnicia, prepared to force the harbour of Constantinople. The terrified Greeks proposed to purchase the departure of their adversaries by a capitation fine, to be levied upon every inhabitant of the city; but Moslemah rejected the proposition. Reduced to despair, the Greeks directed their fire-ships against the Saracen fleet with the most complete success. The Khalif Soliman soon after died of an indigestion, having eaten two baskets of eggs and figs, together with a quantity of marrow and sugar. Soliman had been, prior to his decease, on the point of conducting a second army to Constantinople. He was succeeded by the Khalif Omar, who, besides being an enemy of Moslemah, was a most intolerable bigot. He neglected to send levies to the besieging army, which was compelled to spend more than three months in inaction because of the extraordinary rigour of the winter. Disease and famine reduced the besiegers so far as to destroy for the time their martial enthusiasm, and at last—after thirteen months' investment—the Saracens were compelled to raise the siege. This failure may be said to have been the greatest disaster which ever befell the Oriental world, just as, fourteen years after, the victory of Charles Martel ensured for seven centuries the continuance throughout Occidental Europe of ignorance, oppression, slavish superstition, and feudal tyranny and spoliation. In the words of Syed Ameer Ali, these events "put back the Hour Hand of Time for centuries .....prevented either the growth or progress of civilisation .....retarded the progress of the world for ages." ("Life of Moham.," pp. 342—3). The fall of Constantinople

would have altogether prevented the triumph of the idolators, and the iconoclasts throughout Christendom would have found their best auxiliaries in the idol-hating Saracens. Our limits preclude us from doing more than briefly allude to the disgusting exhibition afforded by the Greek and Latin Christians during the continuance of the Image controversy. The orthodox—*i.e.*, if the Church of England be herself orthodox—Dr. Gregory says, in his "History of the Christian Church," century 9, vol. ii., p. 478: "The cause of idolatry triumphed over the dictates of reason and Christianity: the whole East, the Armenians excepted, bowed down before the victorious images; nor did any of the succeeding emperors attempt to recover the Greeks from this superstitious frenzy, or to restrain them in the performance of this puerile worship. The Council which was held at Constantinople, under Photius, in the year 879..... added force and vigour to idolatry, by maintaining the sanctity of images, and approving, confirming, and renewing the Nicene decrees."

Michael the Stammerer, who ascended the Eastern throne in 820, wrote to Lewis, Emperor of the Franks, describing some of the excesses of the idolators. He speaks of the crosses being pulled down, to be superseded by images; of men and women offering up their hair to painted images; of the paint being scraped from these "holy" idols to be mixed up with the sacrament for the participation of the recipients; and of many other like instances of credulity in association with the new cultus. And Gibbon (chap. xlix.) vividly portrays the rapidity of growth which characterised this new and blasphemous manifestation of superstition. Representations were made of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of the Virgin Mary, of angels, saints, martyrs, and confessors. Finding how eagerly the people embraced the new adoration, the ecclesiastics began to introduce wooden and stone, brass and marble images. "The style and sentiments of a Byzantine hymn," writes Gibbon, in the chapter above referred to, "will declare how far their worship was removed from the grossest idolatry. 'How can we [says the hymn] with mortal eyes contemplate this image, whose celestial splendour the host of heaven presumes not to behold? He who dwells in heaven condescends this day to visit us by his venerable image: he who is seated on the cherubim visits us this day by a picture, which the Father has deli-

neated with his immaculate hand, which he has formed in an ineffable manner, and which we sanctify by adoring it with fear and love.'" This shameful pursuit of the ecclesiastics was long and strenuously opposed by many of the Greeks themselves, to whom the odious appellation of idolators, then freely given to the Christians by both Jew and Arab, appeared most disgraceful, and also most applicable. This "divine image" of Edessa—said to have been a miraculous impression of the countenance of Jesus Christ upon a piece of linen—fell at length into Mohammedan hands at the capture of Edessa. What ultimately became of it we do not know; in all probability the followers of the great Unitarian took care that man should never again prostrate himself and degrade his humanity by bowing before the wretched effigy.

These quarrels would have been spared the Eastern world, and even Christianity would have been the gainer, had the Saracens conquered the City of Constantine. That city would have become the centre of the world's civilisation, the ancient spirit of Greece would have leaped up, inspired with new vigour, and the East would now be even more forward in the van of progress than it is backward in the race.

Had the tide of fortune run the other way at Tours, had the Franks and Teutons been brave and strong only in proportion to their knowledge and refinement, how very different would have been the course of European history! How many a sanguinary record would have remained unwritten! The city and fields of Toulouse would not have been manured by the blood and corpses of thousands of Albigenses; the Holy Office of the Inquisition would not have been suffered to convert Europe into one vast charnel-house; the Huguenots and Waldenses would not have been hunted down and slain like wild beasts; St. Bartholomew's massacre would not have afforded a Pope an opportunity of chanting his *Te Deum laudamus;* Copernicus would not have had to keep his mighty discovery secret for years; Bruno would not have had to witness his truth at the stake; in fine, the world would not have lain, grovelling in abject misery, supine at the feet of the most abhorrent priesthood that ever deluded mankind since the epoch when the priests of Memnon used ventriloquism to terrify an ignorant herd into the belief that a stone image had spoken.

Mohammedanism meant toleration for all religious beliefs, liberty of thought, freedom of speech, and the improvement of the people. Christianity, on the other hand, as understood in the Dark Ages, was synonymous with the antitheses of these. It meant the establishment of the cruel and inhuman power of the Papacy; the strengthening the hands and encouraging the horrible iniquities of the feudal tyrants; the suppression and servitude of the unhappy peasantry; and possibly—but for the Reformation—the brutalisation and barbarising of the Teuton, Latin, and Hellenic races for thousands of years. Papal or Catholic Christianity was based upon a system of centralisation, a policy which was remorselessly pursued by its agents and ministers in every Catholic land. Its one great object was to establish and firmly cement an absolute despotism in Rome. To this end every country was regularly drained of its wealth; to establish this curse of humanity the lives of millions of the people of England, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy, were ruthlessly, remorselessly, sacrificed. "During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Popes made gigantic strides in the acquisition of power.....Their Italian partisans must be rewarded; nothing could be done to satisfy their clamours, but to provide for them in foreign countries. Shoals of contesting claimants died in Rome; and, when death took place in that city, the Pope claimed the right of giving away the benefices.....Rights of every kind were remorselessly overthrown to complete this centralisation.....Sixtus IV. established whole colleges, and sold the places at three or four hundred ducats. Innocent VIII. pawned the papal tiara. Of Leo X. it was said that he squandered the revenues of three Popes, he wasted the savings of his predecessor, he spent his own income..... he created twenty-one hundred and fifty new offices and sold them [making twelve per cent. profit by the transaction.].....Nowhere in Europe could capital be so well invested as at Rome.....The Curia had discovered that it was for their interest to have ecclesiastics all over Europe in their debt. They could make them pliant, and excommunicate them for non-payment of interest. In 1327 it was reckoned that *half the Christian world was under excommunication* [the italics are ours].....The ecclesiastical revenues of all Europe were flowing into Rome, a sink of corruption, simony, usury, bribery, extortion..... 'Whenever,' says the Bishop Alvaro Pelago, 'I entered the

apartments of the Roman court clergy, I found them occupied in counting up the gold coin, which lay about the rooms in heaps.'" (Draper's "Conflict," pp. 274—6.)

The above quotation will, we think, sufficiently demonstrate what was the true nature of the spiritual gain to Europe from the check given to the Saracens in France. We have now to prove the truth of our other positions, namely, to show how that reviving Christianity did its utmost to increase and foster feudalism, and to suppress and enslave the poor. Concerning the origin of feudalism Draper remarks in his "Intellectual Development of Europe," vol. i., pp. 365—6 :—"We have now approached the close of a thousand years from the birth of Christ; the evil union of the Church and State, their rivalries, their intrigues, their quarrels, had produced an inevitable result, doing the same in the West that they had done in the East —disorganising the political system, and ending in a universal social demoralisation. The absorption of small properties into large estates steadily increased the number of slaves; where there had once been many free families there was now found only a rich man. Even of this class the number diminished by the same process of absorption, until there were sparsely scattered here and there abbots and counts with enormous estates worked by herds of slaves, whose numbers, since sometimes one man possessed more than 20,000 of them, might deceive us, if we did not consider the vast surface over which they were spread." Gradually the clergy began to recognise that the extension and further development of the feudal system would tend greatly to enhance and solidify their own ill-gotten authority. Henceforth they followed but too literally the advice given by Paul to Titus: "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good [by which they meant ecclesiastical] work." Now grew up the infamous notion of "Divine Right," by which it was pretended that the power and authority of kings, and in consequence of the barons, were held by direct tenure from God. Year by year the condition of the poor Helots grew more dismally, hopelessly, wretched. Not many centuries before, Roman civilisation had erected towns and villages all over those parts of Western Europe to which their victorious eagles had penetrated. Under the feudal system these were suffered to decay, the country again became covered with forests, only dotted here and

there with convents, monasteries, castles, and the miserable wigwams which the serfs were glad to build within easy reach of the eyries of their oppressors. Many centuries would go by and find the population but slightly increased in number: "Whenever there was a partial peace, there was no occasion for the multiplication of men beyond the intention of extracting from them the largest possible revenue, a condition implying their destruction. Soon even the necessity for legislation ceased; events were left to take their own course.....Between places at no great distance apart intercommunication ceased, or, at most, was carried on as in the times of the Trojan War, by the pedlar travelling with his packs." (Ibid, p. 366.) Under such auspices as these originated the aristocratical system which has continued unto our own day. Even now in by far the major portion of Europe the degrees of caste are in full force. Millions of acres of what should be cultivated land are withheld from the people, in order to gratify the pleasures and passions of those descendants of the ancient man-hunters in whom the savage hunting instinct is not yet extinct. So surely as Pope Gregory VII.—Hildebrand—incited William the Norman to invade and overrun this island of Britain, encouraging him with a consecrated standard and a ring containing one of Peter's hairs, so surely is mediæval Christianity responsible for the serfdom of the middle ages, and, consequently, for the unnatural class distinctions and contrasts of rich and poor under which society labours in the present century. Such pitiful results could never have accompanied the triumph of Mohammedanism. The time is not very distant—even if it be not already arrived—when orthodox Christianity and its once powerful rival will have to yield before another and better religion—Science and Humanity. Now that we are approaching the conclusion of this portion of our subject we may appropriately take a brief restrospect of Mohammedanism, as being in all likelihood the shortest and best method of ascertaining its value when compared with the religion of Christendom.

Here we cannot do better than avail ourselves of the labours of R. Bosworth Smith, M.A. In his excellent lectures on "Mohammed and Mohammedanism" (pp. 25—7), he says: "Glance for one moment at its marvellous history. Think how one great truth, working in the brain of a shepherd of Mecca, gradually produced conviction in a select band of

personal adherents; how, when the prophet was exiled to Medina, the faith gathered there fresh strength, brought him back in triumph to his native place, and secured to him for his lifetime the submission of all Arabia;.....how it crumpled up the Roman Empire on one side, and the Persian on the other, driving Christianity before it on the west and north, and Fire-Worship on the east and south; how it spread over two continents, and how it settled in a third, and how, the tide of invasion carrying it headlong onward through Spain into France, it at one time almost overwhelmed the whole;.....how, throughout these vast conquests, after a short time, to intolerance succeeded toleration, to ignorance knowledge, to barbarism civilisation; how the indivisible empire, the representative on earth of the Theocracy in heaven, became many empires.....how horde after horde of barbarians of the great Turkish or Tartar stock were precipitated on the dominions of the faithful, only to be conquered by the faith of those whose arms they overthrew;.....how, when the news came that the very birthplace of the Christian faith had fallen into their hands, 'a nerve was touched,' as Gibbon says, 'of exquisite feeling, and the sensation vibrated to the heart of Europe;' how Christendom itself thus became for two hundred years half Mohammedanised, and tried to meet fanaticism by counter-fanaticism—the sword, the Bible, and the Cross, against the scimitar, the Koran, and the Crescent; how, lastly, when the tide of aggression had been checked, it once more burst its barriers, and, seating itself on the throne of the Cæsars of the East, threatened more than once the very centre of Christendom." When to this brilliant *résumé* of its progress we add that wherever Islam was extended it brought to all its newly-acquired subjects peace, security to life and property, and emancipation from sacerdotal and political usurpations; when we remember that it revivified ancient philosophy, encouraged and extended commerce and industry; that it impressed upon the European mind the necessity of knowledge and the certainty that ignorance was not synonymous with happiness; that it first taught our fathers that prayers and sacrifices and jejunations were not the best remedies for physical affections; that it gave us—despite the opposition of Christian universities, colleges, Inquisitions, and monks—astronomy, chemistry, literature, and the priceless legacy of Averroes—Freethought—we cannot avoid concluding that

the religion of the "camel-driver of Mecca," anathematised by Rome and scorned by Geneva, hated alike by Oriental, Latin, and Protestant Christians, has been immeasurably and indisputably a more potent factor in effecting the reformation of the world than has the boasted religion of Jesus Christ.

We can well understand—and, in a great degree, sympathise with—the feelings which prompted the learned and refined Syed Ameer Ali—himself a liberal-minded Mohammedan—to express himself thus: "Such were the glorious achievements of the Moslems in the field of intellect; and all arose directly from the teachings of one persecuted man, flying from the sanguinary attacks of remorseless enemies. Called by his voice from the abyss of barbarism and ignorance.....they went out into the world, not to slaughter like the Israelites of old, but to elevate, to civilise and refine. Afflicted and down-trodden humanity awoke to new life. Whilst the barbarians of Europe.....were groping in the darkness of absolute ignorance and brutality, the Moslems were occupied in the task of civilisation. During centuries of moral and intellectual desolation in Christian Europe, Islam led the vanguard of intellectual progress.....The first outburst of Rationalism in the West occurred in the province most amenable to the power of Moslem civilisation. Ecclesiasticism crushed this fair flower with fire and with sword, and threw back the progress of the world for centuries. But the principles of the Liberty of Thought, so strongly impressed on Islam, had communicated their vitality to Christian Europe. Abelard, the impulsive lover of Heloise, had felt the power of the genius of Averroes, which was shedding its light over the whole of the Western world. Abelard struck a blow for Freethought, which his successors were not loth to follow up. Avenpace and Averroes were the precursors of Descartes, Hobbes, and Locke." ("Life of Moham.," pp. 337—340.)

The past history of Mohammedanism is far from presenting us with so dreadful a picture of general retrogression as does that of Christianity. We do not entertain a prejudice against the latter; on the contrary, we state this as our impartial and mature opinion. We do not for an instant claim for Islam that to which it is not entitled; we do not assert that it possesses the elements of progress which characterised the Alexandrian system of philosophy.

But inasmuch as it was less bloody, more tolerant, more disposed to promote the diffusion of knowledge than Christianity, so has it been of greater benefit than the latter to the world at large. In giving us the experimental method of studying science Mohammedanism has done more to promote the welfare of man than have all the sections of the Christian Church for fifteen hundred years.

The religion of Mohammed must for a long time to come exercise a great influence upon the development of humanity. Will that influence be beneficial or maleficent? The question is an important one, because more than one hundred millions of human beings are said still to profess the faith of Islam. It is still powerful in Asia and Africa, and is even yet of some importance in Eastern Europe. In Anatolia, Palestine, Arabia, Persia, Hindostan, the Malay Peninsula, and even Tartary, we find Mohammedanism potential. In all these regions its influence is not to be contemned. "And what is still more to our purpose," says Bosworth Smith ("Mohammed and Mohammedanism," pp. 40, 41), "Mohammedanism, as it spreads now, is not attended by some of the drawbacks which accompanied its first introduction [into Africa]. It is spread, not by the sword, but by earnest and simple-minded Arab missionaries. It has also lost, except in certain well-defined districts, much of its intolerant and exclusive character. The two leading doctrines of Mohammedanism, and the general moral precepts of the Koran, are, of course, inculcated everywhere. But, in other respects, the Mussulman missionaries exhibit a forbearance, a sympathy, and a respect for native customs and prejudices, and even for their more harmless beliefs, which is no doubt one reason of their success, and which our own [Christian] missionaries and schoolmasters would do well to imitate." Mr. Smith assures us that the Mohammedan populations betray an avidity for education, and that they would fill our schools were their prejudices and convictions secure from needless insult. He quotes from Pope Hennessy's "Papers relating to Her Majesty's Colonial Possessions" (part ii., 1873, 2nd division, p. 10) an instance of a young Mohammedan negro who regularly purchases "costly books" from Messrs. Trübner, of Ludgate Hill, London, and who went to Futah, two hundred and fifty miles from Sierra Leone, to obtain better educational advantages.

Freethinkers who may be disposed to consider Moham-

medanism as a useless, moribund superstition may read with profit the following extract from Bosworth Smith, illustrative of the rapidity with which the creed of Islam reforms the wildest, most barbarous negro community: "Polytheism disappears almost instantaneously; sorcery, with its attendant evils, gradually dies away; human sacrifice becomes a thing of the past. The general moral elevation is most marked; the natives begin for the first time in their history to dress, and that neatly. Squalid filth is replaced by some approach to personal cleanliness; hospitality becomes a religious duty; drunkenness, instead of the rule, becomes the exception.....The mosque gives an idea of architecture .....a thirst for literature is created, and that for works of science and philosophy, as well as for commentaries on the Koran." (Ibid, pp. 42, 43.) This able writer, we need scarcely add, proves conclusively every statement he makes, and even shows that Aristotle and Plato are not unknown in the interior of Africa.

Not only, then, has Mohammedanism accelerated the progress of Freethought in the past more, perhaps, than any other religious system: it is still enlightening, refining, civilising, and is, strange to say, active in those regions of Africa wherein Christianity, with its Bible and spirit-bottle, has never penetrated. It is an influence that will pave the way for the diffusion of knowledge and civilisation throughout that vast and comparatively unknown continent, and is, therefore, to-day that which we have demonstrated it to have been centuries since in Europe—the only religious system that has earned a right to be called the Pioneer of Freethought.

On page 544 we asked whether Europe has cause to regret the downfall of the Saracen power in Spain. Perhaps the reader who has thus far accompanied us will be disposed to acknowledge that the fall of Granada was a misfortune at the time to the whole of Western Europe. But it is often urged that the great progress made by the Arabian intellect ought not to be ascribed to the religion of Mohammed, because it is said that that religion is essentially retrogressive, or, at least, stationary. In reply to this, we affirm that before the appearance of Mohammed we look in vain for any indications of intellectual progress among the inhabitants of the peninsula of Arabia. The ante-Mohammedan Arabs were savage and barbarous, possessing little or nothing that can be called a trace or mark of civilisation. In fact,

they appear to have made no advance upon the ancient tribe-system which we find portrayed in the Genesaic narrative of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Ishmael. They were for the most part nomadic, dwellers in tents, occupied chiefly in internecine conflicts, and sedulously maintained the habits and customs of their original ancestors. Perhaps nowhere in the world would the reformer discover a people so ill-calculated for refinement as were these rude children of the desert; their very love of wild freedom and proneness to a wandering life would assuredly tend to discourage any efforts that might be made in their behalf. Mohammed came with his so-called Revelation, and the whole character of the people was changed, as if by the wand of an enchanter. The quarrels between the rival tribes were ended, henceforth the sons of Ishmael were to be united and were to act as the missioners of enlightenment to a benighted world. We can only ascribe this great change to the precepts of Mohammed, which inspired his followers with a new energy, and which were, as Syed Ameer Ali writes ("Life of Moham." p. 291), to "infuse new life into the dormant heart of Humanity." Those who claim for the Prophet "a passionate devotion to knowledge and learning" (Ibid, p. 292) only affirm the truth. To be sure, he was devout and undoubtedly considered that faith in a supreme being was a necessity to man; but he possessed a liberality of mind which we cannot discover in any other religious teacher of the world. "Particular epochs in the history of the world always stand out as the brightest portions of a nation's life. Athens had her Periclean age; Rome her Augustan era; so too had the Islamic world her period of glory; and we may with justice look upon the reigns of Hârun and Abdallah Al-Mâmun as an epoch of equal, if not of superior, greatness and magnificence.....The Saracenic race, by their elastic genius as well as by their central position—with the hoarded treasures of dying Greece and Rome on one side and of Persia on the other—and India and China far away sleeping the sleep of ages—were pre-eminently fitted to become the teachers of humanity. Under the inspiring influences of the great Prophet, who gave them a code and a nationality, and assisted by their sovereigns, the Saracens caught up the lessons of wisdom from the East and the West, combined them with the teachings of the Master, and 'started from soldiers into scholars.'" (Ibid, pp. 295—6.)

Those who consider Mohammedanism to be in itself

retrogressive or stationary forget that the successors of the Prophet laboured hard to establish institutions by which the freedom of their subjects should be guaranteed. After the overthrow of the Persians at Kadessia (A.C. 636) the unhappy subjects of the tyrant Chosroes were delivered from the most hideous despotism of the time. Jews, Persians, and Christians "breathed freely," says M. Gobineau, as quoted by Syed Ameer Ali (Ibid, p. 319), and "the peasantry and petty landowners, trampled under foot by an insolent oligarchy, and regarded with contempt by the priesthood, hailed the Moslems as the forerunners of their salvation. So with other countries. Nations, which till then had slumbered wrapped in the apathy of wretchedness, woke into new life and new energy under the auspices of the Prophet of Arabia. The people everywhere received the Moslems as their liberators. Wherever any resistance was offered, it was by the priesthood and the aristocracy." (Ibid, pp. 319—20.) Under Christianity the world heard but little of the duties of the rulers to the ruled, because the dignitaries of the Churches were too solicitous to teach the doctrine of abject submission to the subject. The Moslems, on the other hand, were remarkable for their love of individual freedom, and their khalifs were quite as amenable to public opinion as were the people in general to the laws. While they retained authority in Europe the caste-distinctions, with which the Christians were so enamoured, came not within their territories. Learning, wisdom, valour, industry, these were the only passports to honour while Mohammedanism retained one rood of Spanish territory. That the religion of Islam was not retrogressive is proved by every historian who has written concerning Spain under the Saracens. Along the banks of the river Guadalquivir alone twelve thousand towns, villages, and hamlets were erected, and Gibbon (chap. li.) gives his powerful testimony in support of the progressive nature of Mohammedanism and its professors: "The Arabs might exaggerate the truth, but they created, and they describe, the most prosperous era of the riches, the cultivation, and the populousness of Spain."

Mohammedanism was synonymous with liberty, and was, therefore, really fraught with auspices of progress to the slaves of those barbarous Goths and Vandals who had blossomed into Christian potentates, reigning by "divine right." It came to the unhappy celibate, shut out from the whole world of humanity in the horrible cells of the cœnobitic

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